

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 ROME 04469 100350Z
ACTION EUR-08

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 INR-05 PM-03 CIAE-00 DODE-00
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C O N F I D E N T I A L ROME 4469

LIMDIS

FROM VATICAN OFFICE

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: MNUC, NATO, NPG, NL, VT
SUBJ: THE NEUTRON BOMB - CONTINUING VATICAN INTEREST

REF: ROME 3126

1. ON MARCH 8, VATICAN FOREIGN MINISTER CASAROLI REMINDED SARROS OF CONTINUING VATICAN INTEREST REGARDING DEVELOPMENTS ON THE NEUTRON BOMB. HE THEN READ FROM AN ARTICLE WHICH APPEARED IN STAMPA SERA OF MARCH 6. THE ARTICLE QUOTES "NATO SOURCES" AS SAYING THAT PRESIDENT CARTER "IS ABOUT TO MAKE A DECISION ON THE MANUFACTURE" OF THE N-BOMB, THAT THE AMERICAN DECISION WOULD BE "ANNOUNCED" AT THE NATO NUCLEAR PLANNING GROUP IN MID-APRIL; AND THUS THE QUESTION WOULD BE DECIDED BEFORE THE ATLANTIC SUMMIT OF LATE MAY. THE NEWSPAPER ACCOUNT ALSO STATED THAT "NATO WOULD BE DISPOSED TO RENOUNCE THE N-BOMB IN EXCHANGE FOR NOT STATIONING THE SOVIET SS 20 MISSILE OR IN EXCHANGE OF THE WITHDRAWAL OF A CERTAIN NUMBER OF ARMORED TANKS OF THE WARSAW PACT FROM CENTRAL EUROPE, BUT INSTEAD THERE ARE FEARS THAT MOSCOW WILL PROCEED TO ALSO CONSTRUCT N-BOMBS THEREBY ANNULLING THE TACTICAL ADVANTAGES OF THE ATLANTIC

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FORCES AFTER A BRIEF PERIOD."

2. STATING THAT OFTEN ITALIAN NEWSPAPERS REPORTS WERE ONLY 20 PERCENT ACCURATE, CASAROLI SAID THAT HE WOULD APPRECIATE ANY COMMENTS WE MIGHT HAVE ON THIS REPORT, PARTICULARLY ABOUT THE PROSPECTS OF SOME KIND OF WEAPONS TRADE OFF WITH THE SOVIETS OVER THE N-BOMB.

3. ACTION REQUESTED: IT WOULD BE APPRECIATED IF DEPARTMENT
COULD PROVIDE US WITH APPROPRIATE TALKING POINTS TO
REPLY TO CASAROLI. GARDNER

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NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
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